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BBE

20 21

BELGRADE - BROOTEN - ELROSA
Hall of Fame

Saturday, January 29, 2022

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Lyle E. Miller</i> | <i>Bud Heidgerken</i> |
| <i>Dr. James Mohs</i> | <i>Roger Lindahl</i> |
| <i>Charles Sagedahl</i> | <i>Emily Roelike</i> |
| <i>Wayne Huffman</i> | <i>Heidi (Lensing) Weller</i> |

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE INDUCTEES

Congratulations to the 2021 Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa Hall of Fame inductees. Your achievements are impressive and worthy of praise. You represent the best of our communities and of what has become BBE Schools. We are honored to have you here for this event.

This induction program marks the third of its kind starting in 2015. Currently the classes of 2015 and 2018 include fifteen individuals and we are proud to add eight more.

We know that participation in extracurricular activities contributes to valuable life lessons and promotes teamwork, sportsmanship, hard work and discipline. The leadership skills and self-confidence last a lifetime.

We invite you to support the BBE Hall of Fame with monetary donations but also with nominations of future inductees. Monetary donations can be sent to the BBE Elementary School, PO Box 39, Brooten, MN 56316. Nomination forms can be found on the school website at www.bbejaguars.org.

Again, congratulations inductees! This is your night. Enjoy it!

Sincerely,

Rick Gossen, Activities Director
Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa Schools



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

B-Club	Belgrade Lion's Club	Jana Mae's
Belgrade Hardware	Anderson-Johnson Funeral Homes	VFW Post 1825
Bayer Built	Central MN Credit Union	Kensington Bank
Bonanza Valley State Bank	Brooten Fire Department	Breitbach Construction
Belgrade Steel Tank	Elrosa Lumber Company	

fastpitch team. She batted .450 as a senior and was a career .325 hitter with six home runs, 90 RBI and 121 stolen bases.

Zach Nelson, who coached her in 11th and 12th grade, said, "Emily has a better arm and range than any girl we've played against. She is extremely fast and can dominate the game in all phases."

At B-B-E, Roelike was part of 56 fastpitch softball wins, 59 basketball wins and 114 volleyball wins.

In college, Roelike shined on Ridgewater College national tournament-bound volleyball and fastpitch teams from 2009 through 2011 (2010 volleyball champions).

Weller enjoyed a prolific four-year Division II volleyball career at Minnesota State University-Moorhead, where she lettered all four years and holds the fourth-most kills of any Dragons volleyball player (1,283 kills).

Post-college years

Weller and Roelike have both settled back to earth after college in their own unique way.

Roelike graduated from SCSU with a B.S. in Recreation and Sports Management. She wore multiple hats while working about three years at the Municipal Athletic Complex through 2016. She was then a rough mill operator at Woodcraft Industries until March 2019. Since then, she's been with Cold Spring Carpet as an installer.

"Growing up on a farm and as an athlete, I really enjoy the hands-on aspect of my job and the physical work. I have a drive for it and absolutely love it," she said.

In the winter, Roelike plays in a women's volleyball league. Her biggest passion remains softball, but now it's slowpitch from spring through fall each year.

"I'm in women's league in Cold Spring on Wednesdays. On the weekends I'm in a tournament team that travels and plays many of the top teams in Minnesota."

Roelike's team is a Class C team but regularly plays Class A teams from Minnesota and other states.

After her college days, Weller married her high school sweetheart, Shane, in June 2014 at St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Elrosa.

Shane is an agronomist for Centrol, and they live in rural Greenwood with their two young children: Abram turns four on January 29, which is the Hall of Fame banquet day; his sister Elizabeth is one-and-a-half years old.

Weller earned a Business Administration degree at MSUM with an emphasis on Management and a minor in hospitality and tourism management.

From MSUM, Weller worked in the banking industry for five years before switching gears to work at Minnewaska Area schools as a Community Education/Activities Administrative Assistant.

"I really enjoyed the Community Education part of my job so I decided to go back to school to earn my license to become a Community Education Director," she said.

"I just finished up my schooling December of 2021. However, in May of 2021, I made a tough decision to quit a job I loved to stay at home with my children while they were young. I enjoy being able to play with them daily and watch them grow! When I return to the work force, I hope to obtain a position in the Community Education department again."

Weller shared a memorable lesson she learned from volleyball coach Kevin Weller, who coached her teams to state in 2007 and 2008.

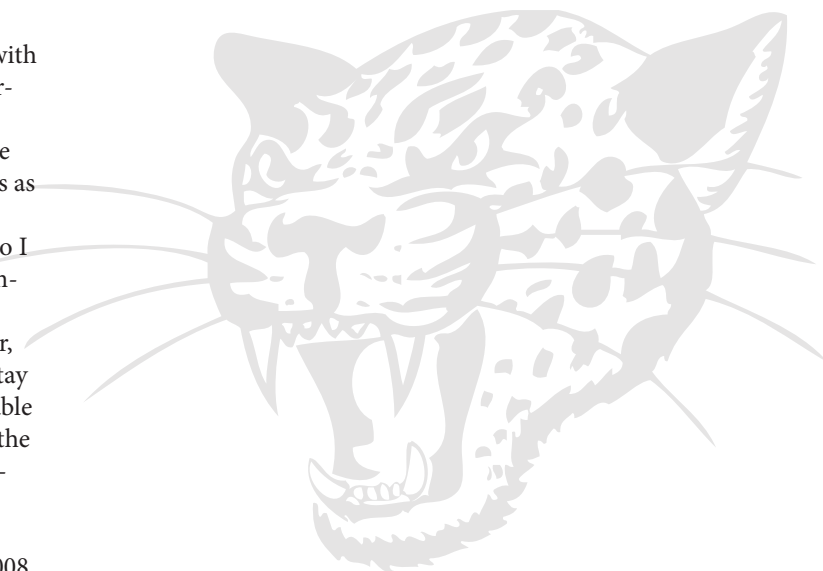


Emily Roelike batting in a Labor Day weekend women's softball game last fall.

"Kevin's lesson was simply to have fun. He would often say this as his last words in a time out. I think this is not only a great lesson for volleyball, but for life."

"It's not all about being the best, it's about our attitudes and how we each can make any experience in life a fun one."

Written by Randy Olson, Bonanza Valley Voice



EMILY ROELIKE & HEIDI (LENSING) WELLER

BBE JAGUARS, CLASS OF 2009

Heidi (Lensing) Weller and Emily Roelike are 2009 B-B-E graduates who left an unforgettable mark on Jaguar girls' athletics while making profound impacts on three sports each.

Roelike was an integral part of 13 varsity teams between 2005 and 2009. In that stretch, teams she played on won 229 games, including 114 in volleyball.

Weller graduated as B-B-E's most decorated girls' track and field student-athlete with four Class 1A All-State medals and a string of conference, sub-section and section titles.

Weller and Roelike were part of an incredible run in volleyball where the team qualified for state three out of four years in 2005, 2007 and 2008.

The dynamic duo also starred on a highly successful girls' basketball team, with Roelike lettering four years and Weller lettering three years between 2005 and 2009. Between 2005 and 2009, the girls' basketball team won 59 games and played in three Sub-Section 6AA-East semifinal games.

Roelike started at shortstop for five seasons on the spring fastpitch softball team and earned All-State honors as a senior. The program played in the Section 5A Final Four in 2007 and 2008 while winning the only fastpitch sub-section title in school history in 2008.

Dairy farm girls

Both Weller and Roelike were raised on small dairy farms that provided no shortage of work when school and sports wasn't consuming their time. Weller is the youngest child of Roy and Sandy Lensing, organic dairy farmers with a 67-cow milk herd when she was in school.

Roelike, daughter of Joel and Joyce Roelike of rural Lake Henry, was raised on a 67-cow dairy farm. Her family sold the milk herd in August 2012.

Weller's siblings are Kari, Kurt, Tina and Ashley.

Roelike's siblings are Chris, Alicia, Josh and Brittany.

Finding a partner to play catch or shoot hoops was never difficult for Weller or Roelike with the dynamic of a big family plus a farm-based childhood, which contributed to the competitive, hard-nosed spirit possessed by both.

Roelike played with the Lake Henry baseball program starting in second grade and ending when she "aged out" of the Legion program.

"I've always liked baseball. I grew up going to baseball games every Sunday. I played a lot of baseball with my brother Josh. Playing baseball with the boys was always a step up," said Roelike.

All three of Weller's older sisters were star volleyball players, and older sister Tina played college volleyball.

Weller was twice an All-Area First Team volleyball selection



Heidi (Lensing) Weller, MSUM-Dragons volleyball player

with the West Central Tribune, and she had 437 kills her senior year with 115 ace blocks. For her B-B-E career, she had 1,070 kills, 235 ace blocks and 104 ace serves.

Weller lettered three times in basketball and started two years at forward while earning 833 points, 661 rebounds, 174 assists and 150 steals in her career.

Coach Greg Hagen said about Weller, "Heidi is a gifted athlete with a drive to win. She is the best leaper I've had the honor of coaching."

In track and field, Weller was a four-time letter winner. Weller earned three All-State medals with top-eight finishes across three seasons in the high jump or long jump.

As a sophomore, Weller took fifth place at the 2007 state long jump event.

As a junior, Weller placed eighth out of the final 16 athletes to earn All-State hardware as a junior in the high jump.

As a senior, Weller won the Section 5A long jump (17'2") and high jump (5'2") titles and later competed in the 2009 state high jump and long jump finals.

At the state meet in her senior year, Weller earned All-State medals in both events: third place (18' 2.5") in the long jump and a tie for fifth place (5'2") in the high jump.

Weller holds the B-B-E record in the 300 hurdles (48.0) after trying it for the first time as a senior.

In her senior year, Roelike was a first team All-Area Tribune selection with 258 kills and 416 digs. She started in the back row as a freshman with Coach Mimi Knutson when the Jaguars busted down the door to state

in November 2005.

"Heidi played front row that year," said Roelike. "As a sophomore, I switched to libero, but my junior year I went back to hitting."

Just 5'6" tall, Roelike possessed a superb jump, "My vertical was my biggest asset, and I learned the approach I needed to get an attack down."

Roelike graduated with 1,308 career digs, a record that was just broken this past fall by Emily Kern.

Roelike was a four-year letter winner at guard and graduated with the third-most points scored in B-B-E history (1,383) to go with 436 rebounds, 278 assists and 270 steals.

Coach Hagen said about Roelike, "A true team leader on and off the floor. During the season or off season, Emily is constantly improving her skills and those of her teammates."

In the spring, Roelike was a five-time starting shortstop for the

PROGRAM SCHEDULE BBE HIGH SCHOOL, BELGRADE

5:00 PM.....Meet and Greet

6:00 PM.....Welcome by Rick Gossen, BBE Elementary Principal and Activities Director

6:00 PM.....Meal (BBE HS Cafeteria)

7:00 PM.....Introduction of the 2021 Inductees by 1972 Belgrade Graduate Bill Gysberg
(Olson Auditorium)

Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa Schools would like to congratulate the 2021 inductees of the BBE Hall of Fame. The development of this organization and the elite membership that it will represent was a vision of many past BBE graduates as well as past and present BBE Staff. The monetary donations and volunteer hours that were given on behalf of this vision are remarkable and can never be repaid. Special thanks to Randy Olson from the Bonanza Valley Voice for his part in writing the stories about our inductees.

THE 2021 INDUCTEES ARE...

Lyle E. Miller

Brooten, Class of 1950

Accepted by Glenn Miller, Nephew

Dr. James Mohs

Belgrade, Class of 1964

Charles Sagedahl

Brooten, Class of 1948

Wayne Huffman

Teacher: 1962-1997

Athletic Director: 1970-2000

Bud Heidgerken

Teacher/Coach/Advisor: 1970-1990

Roger Lindahl

Belgrade, Class of 1980

Emily Roelike

Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa, Class of 2009

Heidi (Lensing) Weller

Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa, Class of 2009

BBE will host a Hall of Fame banquet with new inductees every three years. Looking ahead to 2024, we will need donations in order to make it a reality. Donations for the 2024 banquet can be sent to: BBE Elementary, C/O BBE Hall of Fame, P.O. Box 39, Brooten, MN 56316. There is also a basket for a free will donation by the exit after tonight's banquet. Thank you for your support!

Continued on next page

LYLE E. MILLER

BROOTEN BUCCANEER, CLASS OF 1950

Lyle Miller was a four-sport Brooten Buccaneer athlete during his time at Brooten high school between 1946 and 1950. During that period, he excelled at football, basketball, baseball and track and field.

Lyle Eldred Miller was born on February 19, 1932 in Belgrade. He passed away in Crystal, MN at age 66 on January 1, 1998. He was the son of Christian and Elizabeth (Jensen) Miller, who had eight kids overall.

Christ and Elizabeth were married on May 15, 1913.

Lyle Miller's seven siblings were, from oldest to youngest: Evelyn, Frederick (Bud), Leoyd, Alton, Elda, Cliphord and Dale. Lyle was the second-youngest of the Miller children.

As was common in that era, Christ and Elizabeth Miller lived and farmed at several locations in Crow Lake and Crow River Townships, including near Fish Lake and Skunk Lake.

The Miller family were members of Crow Lake Lutheran church of rural Belgrade. His paternal grandfather, F.C.J. Moller, was the Klokker of the church, which meant he would lead and keep time with all the church music. Grandpa Moller died on the farm at age 58 in Crow Lake Township in 1916, three years after Christ and Elizabeth were married at Crow Lake Church.

The onset of World War II had a major effect on the family, when the three oldest boys were drafted into the war after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. This led the family to move off the farm and into Brooten.

In October 1950, Leoyd Miller purchased the Sinclair Lewis gas station and adjacent cafe. The station and cafe were located along Highway 55 at the present-day site of the Hoplin-Hitchcock Funeral Home. The business was sold through other siblings in the 1950s: Bud and Cliphord in 1954 and to brother-in-law Ervin Mickelson (Evelyn's husband) in 1955.

While Lyle attended BHS, he was in the junior and senior class play, choir from 10th to 12th grade and the boys' octet in 11th and 12th grade. In addition to music offerings, Lyle was in the B Club, the annual staff and the student council. He was a class officer from 9th to 12th grade.

In the fall of 1947, Lyle was a sophomore on the 17-person roster of Brooten's six-man football team. A first-year member of the team, he wore jersey No. 22.

In the winter of his freshman and sophomore years, Lyle was a member of the Buccaneers B-squad basketball team. As a junior and senior, Lyle was on the varsity Buccaneers basketball team.

In the spring of 1947, Lyle juggled his time between the baseball and track and field teams. His athletic prowess allowed him to excel in all four sports throughout high school.

In the fall of 1948, Brooten's six-man football team went 4-2 while playing in the Cornbelt League. Then a junior, Lyle was one of six returning lettermen from the '47 squad.

In Week Two against Grove City with their second straight home game, the Buccaneers got their second touchdown on a sustained drive capped by a Lyle Miller touchdown. A PAT kick was the only difference at halftime, with the Eagles leading 14-12 at halftime.

Grove City took a 20-12 lead in the third quarter. Quarterback Norman Green passed to John Folin to narrow the deficit to 20-18. August Gomer scored the game-winner on a run.

In Week Three in a blowout loss to visiting New London, Lyle scored his team's second touchdown on a lengthy end run.

For the 1948 Homecoming game, Lyle scored Brooten's first touchdown as his team built a 13-0 halftime lead.

Lyle picked off a pass during Starbuck's first series of the third quarter and ran 50 yards to pay dirt for a 19-0 lead. He got back-to-back touchdowns while scoring his third touchdown of the game on an end run, and Brooten ran away with it in a 37-0 win.

The Brooten Review noted, "The Bucs' tackling was vicious, and they were alert at all times. The running of Miller, speedy halfback, was a feature of the game as he accounted for three of the Bucs' touchdowns."

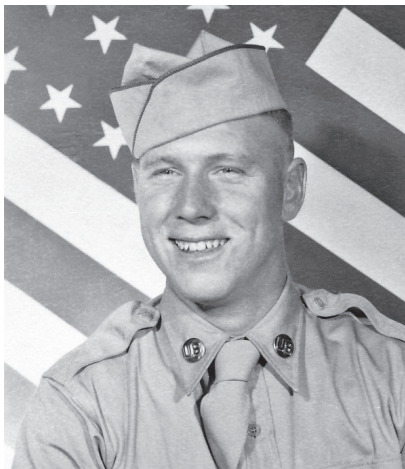
The 1950 Brooten yearbook gives this as his senior quote: "He knows that a football team isn't the only place that needs a good line."

Following graduation, Lyle worked at the station. He then served in the U.S. Army from 1952 to 1954, and he was sent to post-World War II Europe to serve in the Northern Area Signal Service Company based in Germany. By the end of his Army time, Lyle had achieved the rank of Corporal.

The Signal Corps was responsible for communications, telegraphs, set up of telephone lines, telegraph lines and semaphore stations. This allowed a war-time army traveling around to have proper communication.

In 1949, President Harry Truman summoned General Dwight Eisenhower to build an army in Germany. This was the foundation of NATO. They started building around Ramstein Air Base or Ramstein AB, a United States Air Force base in Rhineland-Palatinate, a state in southwestern Germany.

Lyle served about four months in the Signal Corps before being selected to play on his



Lyle Miller pictured in 1952 at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, when he joined the Army.

Company's basketball team. His Company included 260 men from which the team was selected.

One day, Lyle's Company team faced the Army's Regiment team, which was selected out of a group of over 5,000 men. The Company team defeated the Regiment team, much to the dismay of the Regiment's coach, a Lieutenant Colonel who was a West Point Academy graduate.

A fabled story passed on from Lyle says that this Lt. Colonel approached the Company team and asked one of Lyle's Army buddies, named Vito, plus another teammate to join the Regiment team.

According to family lore, the Company's coach protested and said, "Either you take the whole team, or you don't take anyone."

Lyle, Vito and his other teammates played on the Armed Forces traveling team called the Frankfurt Black Knights.

Vito later starred at Loyola University in Chicago, where he became a Second Team All-American.

In basketball, Lyle wasn't necessarily a shooter, but he could run the point on a press and played the 2-guard and 3-guard spots.

The Black Knights traveled to different cities and countries to face other teams. They won the championship in 1954.

When his children later uncovered Lyle's travel passes from Europe, they found that he played basketball all over Europe, including in Poland, Italy, the Ukraine, Istanbul (Turkey), Berlin Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Spain, Portugal and London.

After Miller's time in the Army, he lived back home in Brooten and worked at the family's gas station and cafe.

During that time, he would go to the dances at the Brooten Pavilion. It was there that he started to get to know Rene (Norene) Rooney, a 1954 Brooten graduate. Even

though she was living and working in Minneapolis, Rene would usually come home to the Rooney farm by Padua almost every weekend.

Rene Rooney is the daughter of Francis and Josephine (Jasken) Rooney of Padua. With Rene in Minneapolis, Lyle took a job at Hoerner Box Company in Fridley.

Lyle and Rene were married at St. Elizabeth German Catholic Church in Minneapolis on June 1, 1957. The church was later torn down when the freeway was built. They lived in Brooklyn Center, where their three children were born: Monica, Craig and Todd.

The company Lyle worked at became Hoerner Waldorf Corporation (later Champion International in 1975), where Lyle worked for 30 years, eventually becoming Plant Superintendent. Norene worked at the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority as an Accounts Payable Supervisor.

In the 1960s, Lyle and Rene got caught up in the popular trend of Baby Boomers who lived and worked in the Twin Cities area but wanted to have a "get away" property in rural Minnesota. They purchased a small cabin for \$5,000 on Norway Lake.

In 1977, Lyle earned his Real Estate Broker's license, and they bought their first apartment building in the Camden area of Minneapolis. After Lyle retired from Champion in 1985, he and Norene started their business, Lyle Miller and Associates, and they began buying and managing more apartment buildings in both the Minneapolis area and the St. Cloud area. Eventually they owned and managed 20 different buildings housing 377 units.

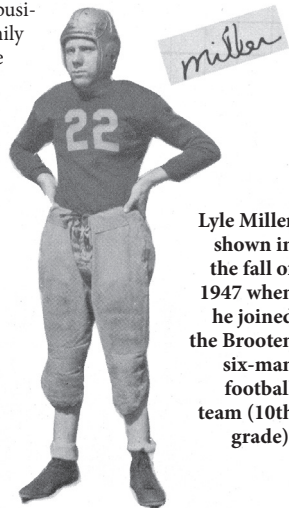
Their son Craig, worked side by side with his father from 1986 until his death in 1998. Craig used that experience to begin his own real estate investment company, Camden Property Management, which has been in business for 23 years. Todd has also worked with the family business for many years. He and his wife Susan have built several award-winning vacation rental units in Grand Marais. Their daughter, Monica, worked as a librarian for 35 years.

Lyle was a big supporter of the Brooten Buccaneers and B-B-E Jaguars athletic teams and attended as many games as possible. He cheered on his numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews over the years.

From 1998 to 2012, the Miller family funded a B-B-E scholarship in Lyle's name that was given to a graduate each year who showed strength in both athletics and academics.

"Mom and Dad were always proud supporters of Brooten and B-B-E schools," said son Craig. "We're proud to say in one way or another that Brooten's where we came from."

Written by Randy Olson, Bonanza Valley Voice



Lyle Miller shown in the fall of 1947 when he joined the Brooten six-man football team (10th grade).

ROGER LINDAHL

BELGRADE REDMEN, CLASS OF 1980

Patience, planning and being in the right place at the right time paid off for B-B-E Hall of Fame inductee Roger Lindahl.

Lindahl, a 1980 Belgrade graduate, was a star three-sport Redmen

student-athlete who landed a 31-year career in education at Benson. He entered the teaching field during a time when job openings were in short supply. Following student teaching, Lindahl substitute taught in the Willmar area and was the football defensive coordinator at Willmar Community College.

"I got so lucky," he said. "I heard about a Phy Ed opening at Benson while golfing in Willmar at golf league. I got my stuff together and went there the next day."

Lindahl was soon hired as Phy Ed and Health teacher and assistant football, head boys' basketball and assistant baseball coaching. Lindahl's career stretched through the pandemic year of 2020-2021, his final year teaching in Benson.

As basketball coach (1990 to 2019), Lindahl had many successful teams, including section runner-up squads in 1999, 2005 and 2007 with a state tournament team in 2005-2006.

Lindahl was head boys' golf coach for the past 16 seasons. His final Braves team advanced to state this past spring, marking a fitting end to an education career where Lindahl made profound impacts on students at Benson schools.

Roger Lindahl is the son of the late Miles and Carol (Birch) Lindahl, Burbank Township farmers when he was born. The Lindahl farm had hogs, chickens and a herd of about 35 dairy cows.

Lindahl has three older siblings: Diane (Rick Gerhardson), Cindy (Kent Bouwman) and Randy (Sandy Larson). His younger siblings are Ricky (Mary Evenson) and Tammy (Duane Braegelman).

In 1957, Miles Lindahl started a T.V. repair, sales and service business at the farm. This helped ease the big move that took place in 1974, when the Lindahls moved into Belgrade and purchased and operated Lindahl Appliance store.

As a town kid, Lindahl took advantage of every opportunity to play sports with whoever was available on summer days. His athletic prowess began paying off in 10th grade, when Lindahl broke into the varsity ranks of the Belgrade football program.

A Redmen star

Lindahl lettered for three years in the Belgrade football program, which went 9-1, 8-2 and 8-1 in his three varsity years while finishing first place in 1977 and runners-up in '78 and '79 in the West Lake Conference. Belgrade ended the season ranked 12th in Class C, missing the state playoffs as just the top eight schools qualified.

Belgrade graduated five all-conference players off that team and 14 seniors overall, including Lindahl's older brother, Randy.

While Lindahl did tremendous damage at halfback, his defensive play at linebacker set a new standard of play for Belgrade football as he earned 121 points as a junior. He was named All-West Lake Conference with fellow junior Al Molitor and seniors Joel Anderson and Roger Anderson.

Lindahl and Molitor were named co-captains for the 1979 Belgrade football team that had 16 seniors.

Lindahl, named M.V.P. of the West Lake Conference, finished with 1,304 rushing yards and a 7.7 yards-per-carry; Molitor totaled 1,087 yards. Reflecting on his high school football days, Lindahl said, "Out of my 1,300 yards, I'd say over a thousand were made just by following Terry Petersen on a quick pitch. With guys like him and my other teammates leading the way, it made it pretty easy to get eight yards a carry."

In basketball, Belgrade improved from 3-16 in Lindahl's sophomore year to 11-9 in 1978-1979. A stout forward, Lindahl lettered all three seasons and was named All-West Lake in 11th and 12th grade.

As a senior, Lindahl's Belgrade basketball team finished as one of the top three teams in school history: 18-3 overall and 8-0 in the conference. The Red-

men played into the District 20 finals before finishing as runners-up. Lindahl earned West Lake MVP honors plus second team All-Area honors with the Willmar Tribune.

Coach Julius Evenson was Lindahl's varsity baseball coach. The Redmen were 23-19 in his three seasons, and he was All-West Lake in 1979 and 1980 while batting .400 in conference games as a senior. Phy. Ed. teacher Julius Evenson who inspired Lindahl to enter the education field.

"I remember during my sophomore and junior years in Belgrade with Evie's classes. I could see that he had so much fun being a teacher. You could tell it wasn't a job for him. It was a passion he had."

The influence of Coach Weimerskirch also stuck with Lindahl throughout his career.

"I remember so many things I tried to mimic from Weimer's coaching and style of play. One thing I could never master that he was the absolute master at was how he could get anyone to come out and play football."

An All-American

Lindahl's next stop was Concordia College in Moorhead, where he was recruited as a running back. Concordia went 31-11-2 overall in his four years there and 25-8 in the MIAC while he played linebacker his last three seasons.

"I was a full time starter my junior and senior years," said Lindahl. "I enjoyed college so much because the team was loaded with so many good players. Every practice was

like playing a game. In four years, I never missed a practice."

In the 1983 season, Lindahl was named co-MVP of the MIAC and earned NAIA All-District and All-American honors.

His record at college allowed him to take a crack at the National Football League. In the summer of 1984, Lindahl attended tryouts for the Minnesota Vikings.

Lindahl kept football playing in his wheelhouse with a subsequent tryout with the Saskatchewan Rough Riders in the Canadian Football League.

A passion for teaching

In the fall of 1984, Lindahl did his student teaching at Central High School in Glenwood under now-retired Steve Hill. Lindahl later connected with Hal Miller, a Willmar high school teacher and taught at Washington Elementary.

Lindahl met his wife, Stacy, through college. She is from Willmar, and she ultimately taught 35 years at Willmar elementary schools.

After his hiring in Benson in 1990, Lindahl was assistant varsity football,

head boys' basketball and JV baseball coach.

Lindahl coached JV baseball for 15 years and then handed that off to a co-worker and shifting over to golf.

The Lindahl family includes Ashley, Aaron and twin boys Adam and Andrew, all Benson graduates between 2007 and 2016.

Lindahl credits his wife for making it all work.

"Stacy loves sports too. That really helps. She understands late nights. From the start of our family, she packed up the kids when they were young. They went to all the games."

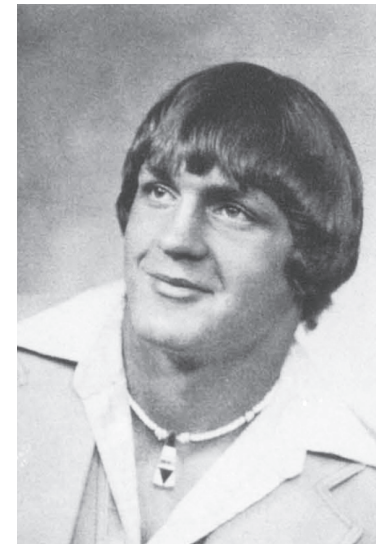
Lindahl stressed the importance of his teammates and coaches, both in high school and college.

"I'm the one getting this honor, but there are so many people involved in the success of my teams at Belgrade or Concordia. Take basketball: I scored a lot of points, but much of that was because everyone was so unselfish. They didn't care who scored. It was just about winning. That was a big reason we were so successful my senior year."

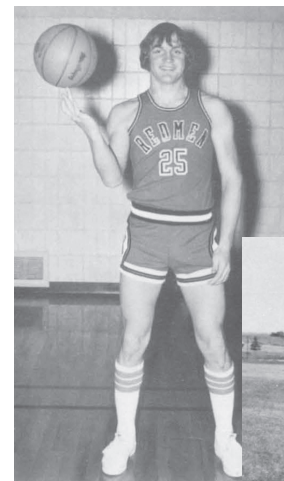
"The same goes with teaching. You don't have

a great career in education without great co-workers. I had that in Benson. I loved every day of it, either in my Phy Ed classes or along the sidelines at Braves games. I'm very fortunate for that."

Written by Randy Olson, Bonanza Valley Voice



Roger Lindahl, senior at Belgrade high school in 1980.



Roger Lindahl: Halfback

Belgrade senior Roger Lindahl in the fall of 1979.

BUD HEIDGERKEN

BROOTEN BUCCANEER, 1970-1990

In the fall of 1970, a young Bud Heidgerken just started his tenure at Brooten high school that lasted 20 years before he jumped head first into the restaurant business in 1990.

Those 20 years were filled with a near frantic level of activity for Heidgerken, as he had a hand in founding both the school's wrestling and fastpitch softball programs plus dramatic expansion of the declamation (speech) program.

In the fall of 2020, Heidgerken was inducted into the Minnesota Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame "Outstanding American" for his contributions to the sport of wrestling as well as his dedication to education and civic service.

Across his life, Heidgerken had a hand in activities ranging from assistant baseball coaching, assistant wrestling coaching plus the head coach of speech and play director at Brooten high school. He also served with a long list of civic organizations in Brooten through 1990 and then in Freeport since then.

In every Brooten wrestling season, Heidgerken was a dedicated assistant coach who worked with four head coaches in that time. The high point was the 1984-1985 season, in which Brooten went 16-2 and claimed the District 20 championship after vanquishing juggernaut Paynesville 24-22.

"The match was held in Brooten in a dual format for the first time in District 20. The gym was packed with over 600 fans. The crowd noise was deafening that day. I will never forget it," said Heidgerken.

Heidgerken first wrestled at St. John's University under Father Otto Weber. That experience led him to coaching the sport at Ashby, where Heidgerken taught for three years starting in 1967.

In his second year at Ashby, the head wrestling coach quit mid-season. Rather than see the program dropped, Heidgerken assumed head coaching for that season and the next. His greatest accomplishment at Ashby was filling out the 12 weight classes.

Heidgerken had a very busy 1970, starting with marrying Ann Blommel of St. Rosa.

"We met at the St. Rosa ball diamond while I was playing softball against her brothers. We went on many dates at the New Munich Ballroom."

Once the 1970 football season was over, Superintendent Victor Clark asked Heidgerken if he would be take the head wrestling coach position.

"Victor really wanted wrestling in Brooten. He was lobbying to get country school districts by Padua into the Brooten district. They would either go to Sauk Centre or Brooten, but we had to have wrestling to bring them our way," he recalled.

Heidgerken convinced head football coach and another new teacher in Brooten, Don Larson, to take the head position.

"Larson was totally unfamiliar with the sport, but I showed him the moves to be taught. He was great with conditioning and dishing out marching orders."

Rather than wait for the kids to come out, Heidgerken personally went farm to farm from Grove Lake to Sedan to Terrace to Sunburg and back. Most parents were unfamiliar with the sport at the time.

The first Brooten team went 5-5 in what Heidgerken admits was a softer schedule. The going got tougher after that as they began knocking heads with the better teams in the Prairie Conference.

"We didn't want to break the kids' spirit that first year."

Keith Krebsbach, who was a high school wrestler, took the head coaching position in 1974-1975 when Larson moved to Sauk Centre. The Buccaneers went 5-0 in Prairie duals to claim the title. Eight of the 13 varsity wrestlers were seniors, and they finished 9-2.

"Keith and I started an elementary program, and kids got into Jaycees wrestling and AAU."

The final two head coaches for Brooten were Jerry Huls (1979-1982) and Joe Traen (1983-1988). Both were great wrestlers in their own right.

Between the 1970-1971 season and the final year of the Brooten Buccaneers in 1987-1988, the wrestling program had an overall record of 174-45-1. In 12 of those seasons, Brooten won 10 or more dual meets when most regular season schedules had just 12 matches.

Heidgerken is proud of each and every student who suited up for Buccaneers wrestling. Many went on to coach themselves: Kraig Presler at Augustana College, Kevin Presler at Royalton, Brendan Bogart at Watertown, Alan Walz at Holdingford and Greg Schmitz at Dilworth.

"Many families helped make the program successful, almost too many to mention. But the familiar ones had the names of Hatlestad, Hanson, Bogart, Schmitz, Fischer, and Walz. The Presler family was amazing, of course. Kraig, Kris and Kyle all placed at State." "When it comes to wrestling, no other family can match the wrestling support that Keith and Esther Presler gave to Brooten."

Kyle Presler, Class of 1987, holds the Brooten career record with 147 wins against just 15 losses. He went 32-1 as a senior, losing 14-8 in the 126-pound state finals.

More than wrestling

Heidgerken poured himself into much more than wrestling in Brooten, and his

upbringing made him well-suited for small town life.

Born on a dairy farm south of Freeport to George and Marie (Middendorf) Heidgerken, he attended eight years at Sacred Heart School in Freeport before attending St. John's Prep and then St. Cloud State, where he earned his teaching degree.

Heidgerken served on the Brooten city council, the Brooten Development Committee (chair), the St. Donatus Catholic church council, the Brooten Jaycees (founding member) and the Brooten Summer Rec board, to name but a few groups he's been involved with over the years in Brooten and later Freeport.

In Brooten, he did all that while also coaching speech and school plays. Their other three children, Holly, Kyle and Brent, were born between 1974 and 1982.

"At Brooten, I learned a lot from senior high English teacher Teddy Clark. She was the expert there and gave me advice. She was very helpful and was one of a kind."

Enter Fastpitch

In 1986, Brooten Superintendent Terry Frazee approached Heidgerken about starting Buccaneers fastpitch softball.

"I joined with Jerry Lindstrom (head coach) to get the program going. I helped with behind-the-scenes stuff. Fastpitch was second-hand to me. It was mostly a matter of getting pitching."

"Most of the girls had experience with Brooten's summer slow pitch league. The kids were ready."

Amy Zehrer, Class of 1988, was Brooten's first pitcher. The Buccaneers went 7-9 in that initial 1987 season with just four seniors: Deanna Hatlestad, Krisa Fauskee, Melanie Fauskee and Cheryl Torgerson.

The 1988 team forged an 11-8 record as Brooten developed its pitching.

"I remember Amy and Toni Zehrer and Janis Arends working with me after their basketball practices in the elementary gym. I'd come off the stage after wrestling was done, grab a glove and start pitching practice."

The athletic pairing of Brooten and Belgrade-Elrosa for all sports brought added depth, as the varsity roster expanded to 20 players. The B-B-E Jaguars had an undefeated (11-0) regular season as Prairie Conference champions and finished 13-1 as District 20 runners-up.

In his final year coaching in Brooten, B-B-E fastpitch earned another District 20 runner-up finish.

Heidgerken helped start multiple Brooten summer softball teams for adults and later youth. He also coached youth baseball.

In the 1970s, Heidgerken started an adult men's fastpitch program, something he's been involved with his entire life.

The late George Olson, father of Jerry Olson of Brooten, approached Heidgerken about starting a horseshoe league, which grew to over 30 teams.

Tennis also became popular in that era, and the summer rec program soon had over 24 teams.

"There were so many good families who did whatever was needed to make Brooten buzz with activity. The school had great summer programs when we got there, but we needed more for adults. That's where everyone, especially the businesses, really stepped up with support."

Small town politician

On June 1, 1988, Heidgerken announced his candidacy for House District 15A, as he attempted to unseat long-time State Representative Sylvester Uphus.

In his campaign literature, he often used the phrase, "Whatever happened to common sense in politics?"

In a close battle during a year when George H.W. Bush won the White House, Heidgerken lost by just 150 votes with the Democratic endorsement.

Fourteen years later, citing the leftward shift of the Democratic party, Heidgerken ran as a Republican for the District 13A seat, which covered Pope County and portions of Stearns and Kandiyohi counties. He won the 2002, 2004 and 2006 elections by wide margins.

"I proudly worked across the aisle with Democrats. Those days seem so long ago compared to the fighting you see today in St. Paul. It's important to put your differences aside. You have to work together for all human beings."

A tough good-bye

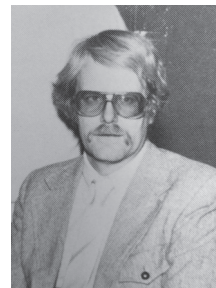
In 1989, the Heidgerkens purchased Charlie's Cafe in Freeport from his big brother Charlie. It was a tough decision, but a year later, they moved to Freeport and said a difficult good-bye to a town they gave 20 years of their lives to.

"It was hard to leave Brooten when we bought Charlie's," he said. "Our kids all had great childhoods in Brooten. We owe the town so much for what they gave my family."

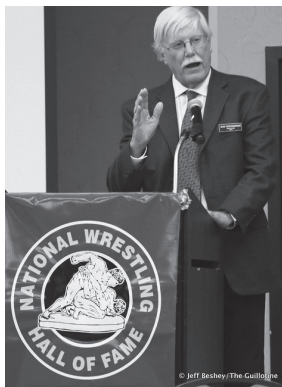
Written by Randy Olson, Bonanza Valley Voice



State Representative Bud Heidgerken speaking on the House floor in St. Paul during the 2006 session.



Brooten Buccaneers wrestling assistant coach Bud Heidgerken in the 1986 yearbook.



Bud Heidgerken giving his speech at the National Wrestling Hall of Fame ceremony in 2020.

DR. JAMES MOHS

BELGRADE REDMEN, CLASS OF 1964

Baseball fever hit Belgrade in the summer of 1959, when town team baseball began playing under new stadium lights for the first-ever night game on June 4.

That night, Belgrade defeated Paynesville 8-7 in 11 innings.

For boys still too young to play either varsity-level or amateur-level baseball, it was still an exciting time. One of those youthful players had just finished seventh grade at Belgrade high school, and the baseball fever stuck.

Dr. James A. Mohs was a typical Belgrade student who enjoyed a wide array of activities. He would later excel as a four-sport Belgrade Redmen athlete who totaled 13 letters across football (three), basketball (three), baseball (five) and track and field (two).

Five years after the town team advanced to the state tournament, Mohs and his teammates for Belgrade high school shined in their own right and won the West Lake Conference baseball championship. Mohs was named West Lake All-Conference that spring in the first year the conference named such a squad.

Jim Mohs is the oldest of five children of the late Edward "Ray" and Bernina "Bernie" (Glauvitz) Mohs of Belgrade. His siblings are Doug Mohs (Joan), Susan (James) Bayer, Patrick "Pete" (Mary Kay) of Belgrade and Roberta Dingmann (Lyle Dunn) of Surprise, AZ. They were raised on Oswald Avenue in a small home near the present-day sales barn and laundromat.

Ray Mohs was instrumental in starting the County Line League after the Cornbelt League folded in the 1960s. A huge baseball supporter, this became the basis of Ray getting into the Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame (September 1985).

Bernie grew up near Belgrade and attended Crow Lake Township country school before her family moved to Minneapolis when she was 12. She was a waitress as a teenager and graduated from Marshall high school in 1945.

Ray and Bernie met at a dance in Spring Hill, and they were married on December 31, 1945. They were heavily involved in the Belgrade community, and baseball was a huge part of their family's lives.

"Baseball was huge in Belgrade, and the level of baseball played in the Cornbelt League was exceptional," said Mohs. "Games were played Wednesday and Sunday nights, and some Sunday home games were in the afternoon."

"My brother Doug ran the lighted scoreboard, and I was one of the two bat boys."

Mohs fondly recalls the late Dennis Weimerskirch as a catcher on that 1959 state tournament team, when Weimerskirch was a month shy of his 19th birthday. They would later be teammates when Mohs played amateur ball as a young adult.

"Dennis was a great friend and a great player," said Mohs. "I was fortunate to play a lot of baseball with him. I spent a good part of a summer with him after Renee (his first wife) died in December 1964."

In his early teenage years, Joe Schleper ran the summer baseball program.

"Just about every kid in town was at the ball-park every morning for practice," said Mohs. "We

really learned how to play the game right, and I believe we all grew to love America's game."

His school years involved much more than baseball. In his senior year at Belgrade, the Redmen had their first above-.500 year since 1958-1959. John Nett was in his second year as head coach, and Belgrade went 12-7 with a 10-4 mark in the West Lake Conference, good for second place.

In football, the Redmen struggled in the early 1960s, but the groundwork was laid for Belgrade's comeback to dominance two years after Mohs graduated. When his brother Doug and cousin Greg were seniors, the Redmen went 8-0 with Doug at quarterback.

"Lefty Hoiem in baseball, John Nett in basketball and baseball (a real tough disciplinarian), plus Dave Sieben and Dennis Kalpin in football were all great coaches," he said.

The most influential teacher of his Belgrade school days was not a coach. That teacher was Mr. Phil Olson, band and choir teacher.

"It was a great pleasure for all of us to know him. He taught me how to play the Eb Alto Saxophone and always challenged me with a more difficult piece to play, always saying 'you can do it.' As a senior, I was selected to sit first chair Eb alto saxophone in the All-District 20 high school band. It was a true honor."

After graduating as Class of 1964 Salutatorian, Mohs had another proud moment that summer when he was selected to play in the Corn Belt League All-Star game in the summer of 1964. That fall, Mohs made the trek to St. John's University, where he lettered all four years at SJU and earned a B.S. in Biology.

In a memorabilia box sits his old Belgrade letterman's jacket. Both that jacket and his St. John's University jacket still fit. He also has the original baseball glove he purchased for \$15 in the spring of 1961 that was used throughout his high school, American Legion, town team and SJU playing days. The glove, a MacGregor Willie Mays Special, was purchased at the same time that his friend Ken Thompson bought his.

Later in the 1960s, Belgrade and Brooten joined town teams to form the B and B Bombers, who played in the new County Line League.

As he began his SJU years, Mohs had designs on becoming a math teacher and high school coach, but this changed at Christmas time in his senior year. That's when a very good friend of his returned from his first semester at SJU. Mohs asked him what he was studying, and he said he was taking pre-med courses in lieu of medical school.

"He told me he thought I should become a doctor, because in his mind I'd make a good one. My first reaction was that he was nuts. But by the time I left his home that afternoon, I decided to change from math to pre-med, and I never looked back."

Mohs graduated with an M.D. from the U of M Medical School in 1972. After completing an internship at St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth in 1973, he began serving as a full-time family physician in Melrose from 1973 to December 2006. He was a part-time doctor in Melrose from 2007 to 2012.

Mohs met the love of his life, Nancy Decker, at the Melrose hospital.

"She had returned from spending two years in the Peace Corps in Niger, where she worked as an X-ray tech. She was looking for a job to earn some money so she could travel throughout Europe. I asked her out, and four months later we were married on September 21, 1974 at St. Mary's Church in Melrose."

Their 47-year marriage has been blessed with three children: Matt (Ali), Mara (Troy) and Peter (Missy).

"Without a doubt, my greatest achievement, and the one I will always be most proud of, is marrying Nancy."

They are especially proud of their six grandchildren: Nick, Lauren, Grace, Isaac, Rowan and Neilah. Dr. Mohs and his wife go above and beyond to follow them in their activities.

"We try not to miss any event," he said. "We've developed a special bond with our grandkids. They text us a lot, which is pretty neat considering our age. They are a huge source of joy in our lives."

Written by Randy Olson, Bonanza Valley Voice



Dr. James Mohs in his senior year photo of the Belgrade annual.



Dr. James Mohs and his wife, Nancy, pictured at St. John's Abbey Church.

CHARLES SAGEDAHL

BROOTEN BUCCANEER, CLASS OF 1948

Charles Sagedahl of Brooten, affectionately known as “Chuck”, is a lifelong educator who excelled in a wide array of activities in athletic and Fine Arts, whether it was at Brooten high school or later at Concordia College in Moorhead.

A 1948 graduate of Brooten, Sagedahl played basketball, football and track and field during all four years as a Buccaneer student-athlete as well as baseball in 11th and 12th grade. He likely would have had four years of baseball at BHS, but Brooten didn't field a baseball team during a stretch of years into the 1940s.

“When Seely Eastman came to Brooten (in 1938), he was a track man, and baseball was put on hold. Brooten re-instated baseball in 1947,” he recalled.

“Coach Bersie was something else. He was a tough coach. In the class, we could get him off on a tangent bringing up World War II. He served in the Air Force and flew over Africa, and he could go on and on about that.”

Bersie also played on Brooten's summer town team and was a teammate with many of his Buccaneer athletes.

“Our six-man football field was on the north side of the train tracks. In the spring, we'd run to the park by the Pavilion for track practice. Coach Bersie would run with us. There was no walking to practice.”

Six-man football was played with two ends, two half backs, a center and a quarterback all playing on an 80-yard field.

Sagedahl was also coached by Brooten Superintendent O.D. Hanson, who coached basketball and football.

“I remember playing with Vernon Marthaler. He was fast. I'd consider him the best male athlete to come out of Brooten. He talked me into joining track.”

Sagedahl served on the student council through high school and was class vice-president and treasurer. He was co-captain of the football team as a senior and co-captain of the basketball team as a junior.

Sagedahl also played catcher and shortstop for the Brooten Buccaneers and the town team. He played with younger siblings Kenneth (Kenny, Class of 1949) and Roger (Class of 1951).

“All of my brothers played at least some town team baseball part of our lives,” he added.

In those days, the Brooten baseball field was set at the current Brooten softball park by the Pavilion.

“The Brooten baseball park was an outstanding field,” he said. “When you walked off of the highway, home plate was right there. Foul balls flew across the road, and we'd get a nickel for foul balls. We enjoyed tracking them down.”

The field had a short fence that was about six feet tall, he recalls. Sagedahl was also in the Senior Chorus, Boys' Chorus and Boys' Octet under Brooten choir director Murrae Freng, who also taught at Alexandria high school and once held the position of executive director at the Minnesota High School League.

“Murrae Freng and Coach Bersie inspired me to be a teacher and a coach.”

After graduating from BHS, Sagedahl was off to Moorhead for college, where he had his sights set on playing football and baseball for the Cobbers.

“When I was a freshman, I worked at the school cafeteria. I injured my elbow and shoulder carrying pop cases.”

The doctor said he was done playing baseball. His arm was in a sling for six weeks.

“That was the end of college baseball.”

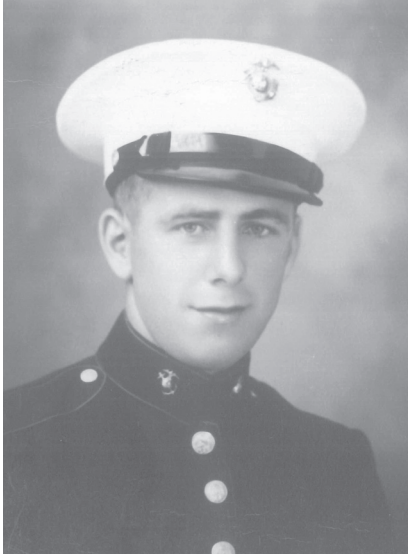
That following summer when he returned to Brooten, he tried pitching for the town team.

“I think I walked four guys in a row. I lost my control.”

That fall, Sagedahl played halfback for his second year of college football under legendary Concordia coach Jake Christiansen, the “Sly Fox” known for his cunning football plays. The college football stadium bears his name today.

Sagedahl had two years of college under his belt when the Korean War broke out.

“I was at a movie at the Brooten theater, and I saw a news reel talk about the war. Soon after that, I signed up with the Marine Corps,” he said, enlisting in June 1951.



Charles Sagedahl in the Marine Corps.

Sagedahl trained in San Diego and Camp Pendleton. He fought on the front line with the Third Battalion, 5th Company, and he lost many of his Marine comrades in the mountainous terrain they were in.

“I wrote letters of condolences to their families.”

After his discharge in July 1954, Sagedahl worked for NSP and returned to college. He finished his B.A. degree in Physical Education and History at Concordia in 1956, and his teaching career soon commenced.

Sagedahl first worked at the Oakland YMCA in Oakland, CA and camp director in the Santa Cruz Mountains before returning to Minnesota. His first teaching stint was at West Concord in southeastern Minnesota.

He also taught and coached at Brewster high school, Stanley Wisconsin, twice at Menahga and at Franklin Junior High in the Minneapolis school district.

“I taught and coached and did summer programs,” he said.

In 1961 while he was an assistant coach, the Brewster 8-man football team went undefeated. One player was Division I recruit Gary McNab, who played for the U of M Gophers in their Rose Bowl era.

A close-knit family

Charles Sagedahl is the son of the late Cornell and Opal (Kalland) Sagedahl. Cornell, a milk route driver, carpenter and railroad worker, passed away in 1981 at age 82. Opal, who was a reporter for multiple decades for the Willmar Tribune, Brooten Review and Bonanza Valley Voice newspapers, beginning in 1950 and writing into the 1990s.

Charles Sagedahl is the oldest of eight children born to Cornell and Opal. Following him were Kenneth, Roger, Eileen, Sherwood, Larry, Robert and Suzanne.

His coaching was always a huge part of Charles and Karen Sagedahl's life, as he held the head coaching position for many years in football and girls' basketball at Menahga plus assistant coaching for boys' basketball plus track and field and athletic director.

Sagedahl earned multiple awards, including the 1985 Park Region football coach of the year, the Menahga Teacher of the Year in 1995. He served as teacher, coach and athletic director at Menahga in various capacities from 1966 to 1968 and 1977 to 1995.

Sagedahl's children are Steve, Scott, Sheldon, Kristi, Karl Jon and Kari; he has two stepchildren: Tom and Kristine.

Six of the eight children were Menahga graduates, and five of his grandchildren are Menahga graduates. Altogether, Charles and Karen have 20 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren and have hopeful expectations to gain two more great-grandkids in 2022.

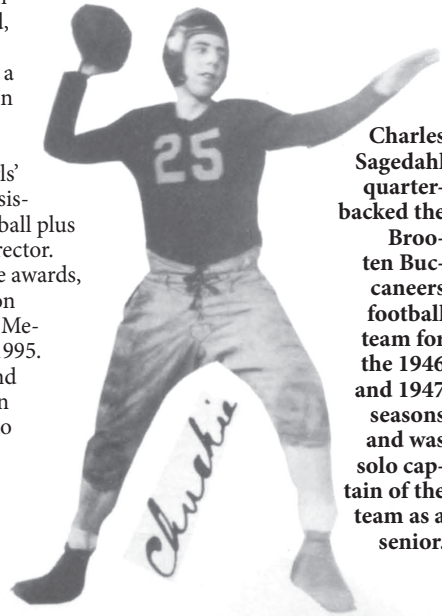
Through the years, the Sagedahl siblings have remained close and still gather as often as possible. They have lost Kenny and Larry in 2003 and 2020, respectively.

The Sagedahl family Christmas and yearly sibling and spouse gatherings included Sagedahl and his brother Bobby playing their guitars with everyone singing along.

“We have always treasured time we could connect and create memories.”

Upon his retirement from Menahga schools in 1995, Sagedahl said, “The greatest satisfaction in my career is when alumni come back and I find out how well they are doing in life. If you can help one student, it's all worth it.”

Written by Randy Olson, Bonanza Valley Voice



Charles Sagedahl quarterbacked the Brooten Buccaneers football team for the 1946 and 1947 seasons and was solo captain of the team as a senior.

WAYNE HUFFMAN

BELGRADE REDMEN, BBE JAGUARS, 1962 - 2000

After graduating from Wadena high school in 1957, Wayne Huffman was content on settling into a career in farming and agriculture.

This changed when a good friend suggested he enroll at Moorhead State Teachers College at a time when public school enrollments were expanding leaps and bounds across the country.

What developed was a career spanning nearly four decades in education in a time that had a rampant level of changes that etched history into public schools across the globe.

A full 30 of his 38 years in education included what he calls “the greatest job I could have ever had” as he guided a tight ship in the athletic departments of Belgrade public school and later the B-B-E Jaguars athletic program.

“I loved every minute of it,” said Huffman as he reflected on his time as Athletic Director of the Belgrade Redmen and B-B-E Jaguars. Huffman, who taught social studies from 1962 to 1997, served as athletic director at Belgrade and Belgrade-Elrosa high school from 1970 to 1989. In 1989, Huffman took over athletic director duties of one-year old B-B-E Jaguars athletics, a title he held through retirement in 2000.

Huffman served in a position where he received numerous awards, accolades and a high level of respect and adoration for his dedication to student activities. B-B-E's Class of 1998 dedicated their yearbook to Huffman and the late Dennis Weimerskirch, his close friend and teaching comrade. In the yearbook, the class said, “Wayne continues to stress the ideals of hard work, fair play and sportsmanship.”

Huffman said about his role as athletic director, “I always had a great interest in athletics with limited participation as a student. Once I was a staff member at Belgrade, I helped with all kinds of athletic activities, such as preparing the football field, scoring football and basketball games, working track and wrestling meets and attending all the games.”

His role as A.D. developed when Dave Sieben, his Belgrade colleague and another close friend, moved to Melrose in 1970. When Sieben moved to Melrose, he recommended Huffman for the A.D. job, and he was hired for the position that summer.

The influence of a good friend

Charles “Wayne” Huffman is the son of Charlie and Joyce (Pike) Huffman, who were Wadena County dairy farmers their whole life. He has one sibling, younger sister Nancy, who is married to Kenneth Lawson. The Huffman family farm was located about five miles south of Wadena and bordering the Todd County border off of Highway 71.

Farm life was a dominant part of Huffman's childhood, and dairy farm work with their herd of 20 to 25 jersey milk cows consumed a major portion of his time.

“My good friend Tom Smith had an uncle who was a professor at Moorhead State Teachers College. As summer went along, Tom convinced me I should give college a try. I really owe him. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't be where I am today.”

Huffman earned a B.S. in Social Studies.

In addition to college duties, Huffman courted his wife, Carol, a 1959 Wadena graduate. They married on June 3, 1961 at the First Methodist Church in Wadena.

Once he earned his teaching degree, Huffman sought out job listings provided to graduates by the college.

The day before the teacher's workshop was set to begin in late August, Huffman got a call from Belgrade Superintendent O.E. Dahl.

“Mr. Dahl told me that they had an opening. He wanted to know how long it would take for me to come to Belgrade.”

The call came at 10 a.m., and by 2 p.m. that same day, Huffman arrived at Dahl's office to sign his contract.

Huffman became heavily involved in the Belgrade community in addition to his teaching duties. In 1967, Huffman joined the Belgrade Lions.

“Dave Sieben and Dennis Weimerskirch were Lions members. Bob Peterson, who worked for the feed mill, invited me to join.”

Huffman was later part of the Grace Lutheran church council as well as the Belgrade city council.

Huffman was Belgrade's summer recreation director for 12 years. He was also part of the movement in town to build the Belgrade Swimming Pool, which opened in June 1981. Huffman served on the pool board for 17 years, and he was the pool's first manager.

Wayne and Carol Huffman had four children. Michael was born in Moorhead. Dean, Jon and Mary were born in Sauk Centre. From their four children, the Huffmans have been blessed with seven grandkids and six great-grandchildren.

Huffman also coached summer youth baseball and was junior high boys' basketball coach for many years in the 1970s. His 1970-1971 team included 34 boys.

Big educational changes

Just two years after assuming the Belgrade A.D. position, Huffman's role overseeing Redmen athletics greatly expanded with the advent of girls' interscholastic competitive sports in American high schools.

While compliance was not mandatory for schools until 1978, Belgrade high school introduced varsity-level sports for the 1973-1974 school year. The lone sport offered was girls' basketball, which was held during the fall season. They were led by head coach Pat

Perry and assistant coach Bob Cassidy.

In the 1974-1975 season, volleyball plus track and field were introduced, and the Redmen were led by head coach Linda Rother in both of those sports.

Over the next 13 seasons, Belgrade's girls' sports won numerous volleyball and girls' basketball conference titles and a handful of District 20 titles.

Starting in the spring of 1982, the Belgrade and Brooten track and field teams joined for what became a wildly successful pairing. Both the boys' and girls' teams won conference titles that year.

In 1983, the B/B girls' team won the Prairie Conference and District 20 titles while also earning the runner-up trophy in Region 5. Over the next three years, the B/B girls' team continued winning conference titles while climbing the ranks at the state meet. They took 10th at state in 1984, sixth at state in 1985 and then won the Class 1A title in 1986.

“From a personal standpoint, the team's 1986 state title was particularly satisfying because our daughter Mary participated on the team,” said Huffman.

Mary Huffman, just an eighth grader, ran the third leg of the 4x200 relay that also included seniors Carmen Weller and Mary TeBrake and sophomore Gretchen Terhaar. The B/B team had six girls compete at state, including Michele Marthaler and Amy Kampsen.

The Belgrade athletic program saw countless boys' and girls' teams find success in conference and post-season play, all highlights of Huffman's tenure as Belgrade A.D. The 1982 football team went 12-1 with their only loss coming in Prep Bowl I at the brand new Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, where Truman upended the Redmen by a 16-14 score. Belgrade lost in the state quarterfinals in 1983.

The 1984 Belgrade volleyball team also advanced to state, and the Redmen finished 25-1 overall with the third-place Class 1A trophy.

In the mid-1980s, Huffman helped spearhead talks with Brooten regarding full pairing of all sports. From 1986 to 1988, the details became clearer.

The March 16, 1988 Belgrade Observer announced, “School boards vote to pair athletics”, and in June of that summer, the name of the B-B-E Jaguars was selected.

Meanwhile, with declining enrollment putting the crunch on school budgets, the two schools came together to pair academics over the next year.

The January 18, 1989 Observer illustrated the enrollment numbers. At its highest point of enrollment, the Belgrade-Elrosa high school had 413 students in grades 7-12. By 1988-1989, that figure fell to 241. In Brooten that year, the grades 7-12 enrollment was 175.

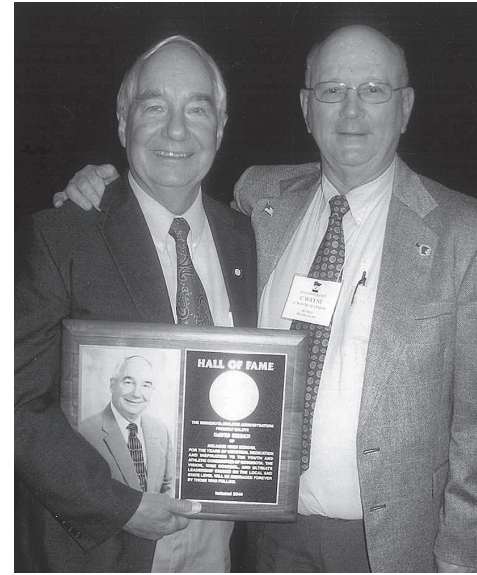
One month later, the boards paired the administrative staff, and Huffman was hired as the B-B-E Athletic Director at the February 14, 1989 joint board meeting. In addition to this pairing, the teaching staff was merged with separate elementary schools but paired grades 7-9 (in Belgrade) and grades 10-12 (in Brooten).

Huffman said, “The pairing of the two schools was another big achievement for our communities. Both schools were arch rivals just seven miles apart. The pairing was a very smooth transition with continued great success.”

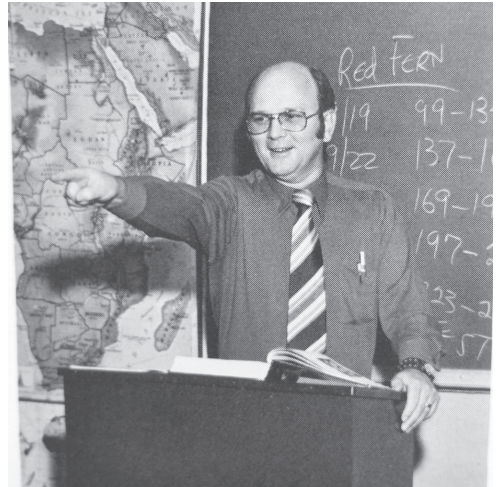
In addition to the numerous teams who excelled in his career as A.D., Huffman celebrated numerous individual champions who won state titles for Belgrade or B-B-E in wrestling, cross country, track and field as well as many more who won district and region titles through the years.

“I believe achievements are not the result of one individual. It is said there is no 'I' in the word team. Athletic achievements are the result of teamwork. I had a great team starting with the Boards of Education, school administration, coaches, the student-athletes and the communities,” he said.

Written by Randy Olson, Bonanza Valley Voice



Long-time friends Dave Sieben and Wayne Huffman at a Hall of Fame banquet in 2010.



Wayne Huffman in his Belgrade high school classroom during the 1975-1976 school year.